

Message Text

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12

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 061108Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5701

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 6166

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, LA

SUBJECT: LAO NEGOTIATIONS: THE FAR AND LPF

MILITARY TO MEET ON THE PROTOCOL

1. I CALLED ON SOUVANNA TODAY PURSUANT TO HIS REQUEST EARLIER IN THE WEEK (VIENTIANE 6104), ALTHOUGH PHENG HAD ALREADY GIVEN ME LAST NIGHT INDICATION OF HOW PRIME MINISTER PLANNED TO DEFUSE POLITICAL CRISIS. SOUVANNA REPEATED TO ME WHAT I HAD REPORTED IN VIENTIANE 6140 AND 6141: THAT HE COUNTED ON SOVIET-SPONSORED DISCUSSION BETWEEN FAR GENERALS AND LPF MILITARY ON MILITARY ASPECTS OF PROTOCOL TO PLACATE FAR'S FEARS. HE SAID HE WAS WAITING FOR OUTCOME OF FIRST MEETING TODAY AND, IF IT WAS FRUITFUL, OTHER MEETINGS WOULD BE HELD RAPIDLY BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES UNTIL ALL FAR APPREHENSIONS HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED. HE SAID HE HAD ALSO SUMMONED NGON SANANIKONE FOR LATER IN THE DAY TO ASK HIM WHETHER HE IS OPPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR PROTOCOL OR ANY PROTOCOL IMPLEMENTING FEBRUARY AGREEMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID HE WILL SEE KING IN LUANG PRABANG OVER WEEK-END TO INFORM HIM OF POLITICAL SITUATION. NO MENTION WAS MADE OF SOUVANNA'S INTENTION EXPRESSED EARLIER THIS WEEK TO TENDER HIS RESIGNATION.

2. SOUVANNA EXPLAINED THAT HE WISHES TO AVOID ABRUPTLY PRECIPITATING NEGOTIATIONS BUT IF THE MILITARY CANNOT RESOLVE THEIR RESPECTIVE DIFFERENCES SO THAT AT LEAST FAR CAN SUPPORT THE PRIME MINISTER IN SIGNING OF PROTOCOL, CONFIDENTIAL

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THEN IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO COMPLETE THE TASK HE HAS SET FOR HIMSELF. WHILE SOUVANNA WAS VISIBLY PLEASED WITH IDEA WHICH PERMITS CONTINUATION OF NEGOTIATIONS AND WHICH MAY EVEN HOLD POSSIBILITY OF GAINING

FAR SUPPORT FOR THE PROTOCOL, HE ALSO REALIZED THAT
THIS PRESENT PHASE MAY BE HIS LAST CHANCE TO ACHIEVE
IMPLEMENTATION OF VIENTIANE FEBRUARY AGREEMENT ON BASIS
PRESENT PROTOCOL NEGOTIATED OVER LAST SIX MONTHS.
HENCE, SOUVANNA SAID THAT IF THE MILITARY DISCUSSIONS
FAIL, THE POLITICAL CRISIS WHICH LOOMED SO LARGE ON
THE HORIZON EARLIER THIS WEEK HAS ONLY BEEN POSTPONED.
DEAN

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O - MR. NEWLIN.

CONFIDENTIAL

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